

Electronic solution for the nurse education experience

Elsevier, publisher of scientific, technical and medical information products and services, has launched *nurse for life*, an electronic product for UK nursing students.

nurse for life allows nursing students to access their textbooks electronically via a DVD

that loads the ebooks they have purchased onto the hard drive of their computer. Information can be accessed quickly by searching across their textbooks while an automatic reference tool imports all bibliographic information whenever a quote or passage is copied.

Being able to use all of the images in the books for presentations and assignments should prove a real asset to students. Many books feature a wide range of 3D animations for an integrated learning experience.

www.nurseforlife.com

Babies still at risk

In its fourth annual report, *Baby steps to better care*, special care baby charity Bliss reports that minimum staffing standards are still not being met and units are having to close to new admissions due to lack of staff. Mothers and babies are being transferred, putting intense strain on families at a critical time.

The findings were based on a Freedom of Information request sent to every UK neonatal unit inquiring about activity April-September 2007, and a survey of 500 parents. It was revealed that staff shortages

remain a huge problem. Between 2006 and 2007, 160 more nurses were recruited to SCBUs but there was still a shortage of 1,700 neonatal nurses to provide the minimum care needed in 2007.

While the one-to-one nursing care standard is met for children and adults, it remains common for a nurse to have to care for two babies in ICU at one time. Nurses report that they are not able to spend enough time with parents giving reassurance and information. One level three unit and 25 level two units had no dedicated neonatal consultant last year.

It is recommended that units do not exceed an average occupancy of 70%. In 2007 only one in five of the most specialised units met this standard and a third of all units reached 100% capacity or more at some point. One in five units closed for seven weeks of a year.

Long distance transfers of babies due to lack of capacity are all too common. Over half of units said they had to close to new admissions at some point. Over the five month period on average three babies a day were transferred due to a lack of staffed cots. While parents' responses were positive about care received, the financial and emotional impact of transfers was great.

www.bliss.org.uk



Cot death leaflets are available in six languages

NHS Blackpool has translated an important baby care leaflet published by the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (FSID) into six languages. The leaflet details room-sharing advice, namely that for the first six months the safest place for a baby to sleep is in a cot in a room with the parents.

The advice card has been translated into Chinese, Gurajati, Kurdish, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu. It is hoped that they may help prevent cot death in the UK's diverse ethnic communities.

FSID Director Joyce Epstein said: "These translations are invaluable to help us reach communities who may not be able to access or understand our baby care advice."



Angela Wilson, Service Manager Health Visiting and School Nursing for NHS Blackpool, said: "It is important that our staff are able to communicate this information with all sections of our community and we are happy to be able to share this with FSID."

The translations can be viewed at www.fsid.org.uk/translation-news.html

England director appointed for RCM

Jacque Gerrard has been appointed as new director for the Royal College of Midwives UK Board for England. Mrs Gerrard, a senior midwife, has more than 26 years experience in the NHS and intends to work for a maternity service focussed on the needs of women and their families, with midwives playing a pivotal role in making this a reality.

Prior to her appointment she was instrumental in the midwifery, neonatal and paediatric service reconfiguration at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust. She takes up the post in the midst of a baby boom, but NHS spending on maternity was cut by £55 million in 2006-07, leading to staff shortages. Jacque will work to promote the College's interests at a national level, especially the recruitment and retention of midwives.



Natural delivery increases responsiveness to own-baby cry

A study published in *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* suggests that vaginal delivery mothers are more sensitive to the cry of their own baby than those who have a caesarean section. The capacity to develop the behaviours needed to parent successfully is supported by specific brain circuits and a range of hormones. Vaginal delivery uniquely involves the pulsatile release of oxytocin from the posterior pituitary, uterine contractions and vaginocervical stimulation. Researchers used MRI to see which brain areas were less active in those who delivered by CS and results supported the theory that the responsiveness of the maternal brain was decreased in the early postpartum.